NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

January 31, 1997

THE SERIOUS SIDE

NOON BALLOON

The Noon Balloon presentation for Tuesday, January 28, 1997 was delivered by **Peter Wagner,** Assistant Curator, Department of Geology, Field Museum. Peter discussed general methodological issues pertaining to reconstructing phylogenies for fossil taxa. He addressed the question of the accuracy of different methodologies to estimate a phylogeny by simulating the impact of sample frequency for each methodology being considered. He demonstrated a significant loss of accuracy for all methodologies when sampling frequency was low.

FIELD MUSEUM HOSTS VIP GUESTS FROM SPAIN

On January 29, the Field Museum was honored by a visit from Ignacio Gonzales, Secretary of Education and Science; Juan Antonio Puigserver, General Secretary of the Department of Education (Spain); Ganzalo Gómez, Advisor of Education for the Embassy; Rosario Fernández, General Vice-President of International Cooperation; and Miguel Martin, Cultural Center of Spain. **Maureen Ransom** (Education) gave them a tour through ***Egypt, What is an animal?*** and ***Life Over Time.*** They also met with **John McCarter** and **Mary Ellen Munley** for coffee in The President's Office. **Carolyn Byrne** (PR) gave them gift bags as mementos and the visitors gave some CD's to the Museum in return.

MORE Volunteers are needed !
for
Afropop Worldwide Dance Party
This event will be held in Stanley Field Hall
Friday, Feb. 28 from 8 pm to 1 am.
Volunteers will be asked to work a two hour shift in exchange for free admission.
Food and beverages will be available for purchase throughout the evening.
If you would like to volunteer, please contact Membership (x453).

A VISITOR

A VISITOR is the most important person in our organization.

A VISITOR is not dependant on us, but we on him/her.

A VISITOR is not an interruption of our work, he/she is the purpose of it.

A VISITOR does us a favor when he/she calls on us, we are not doing him/her a favor by serving him/her.

THE LIGHT SIDE

PROFESSIONAL CRITICS HAVE THEIR SAY

Our Flick of the Week is "The Relic," a surprisingly entertaining "monster-on-the-loose" picture set mostly in halls and private passageways of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. A scientist's experiment goes terribly wrong as the museum winds up being shipped a rapidly growing and lethal creature that is part bug, part human and part reptile. It also likes to rip the heads off its victims and drink their brain fluid... Good morning! -- Gene Siskel, *Chicago Tribune*

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. It's Got Fangs. One of the guilty pleasures that Hollywood movies ... supply is the spectacle of a stuffy cultural institution being trashed to within an inch of its life... In Peter Hyams' lavishly produced horror thriller ... that institution is a natural history museum in Chicago, and the destruction is carried out with a degree of passion for shattered glass, waterlogged treasure and the humiliation of the high and mighty that only the brawniest big-budget action-adventure films can muster... True to its genre, "The Relic" throws in some slender subplots that help rationalize who gets slaughtered and who is spared. One involves the rivalry of Margo and a Machiavellian colleague ... for a grant. Another finds the smart police lieutenant ... standing up to the publicity-seeking Mayor... Also on hand are the haughty museum director ... who insists the gala be held at all costs, and an aged scholar ... for whom the monster's appearance is a kind of professional validation... None of these wisps of story matter a whit once the property damage has begun to mount. -- Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

'Relic': A creaky creature feature ... this predictable if nastily efficient thriller about a mutant monster that terrorizes a Chicago museum full of gala-going society snooties would have felt as musty as a moldy mummy. But now, amid caviar-quality Oscar contenders, it's a palate cleanser if you have a taste for explicit decapitations and loopy macabre humor, that is. Much heavy-handed biological and evolutionary jargon is employed to explain the sudden appearance of a brain-sucking lethal lizard that came to the Windy City aboard a Brazilian ship. You haven't seen anything until you've witnessed Penelope Ann Miller, who has yet to find a role that fits, conducting genetic research in an ever-chic little black dress... The year is young but here's a prediction that will surely stick: No other '97 film will repeat the term "hypothalamus" as often ... Susan Wloszczyna, *USA TODAY*

...This is a clever monster. At one point, even though steel security doors have slammed down and isolated all parts of the museum from one another, the monster seems capable of simultaneously chasing the mayor and his friends down the tunnel, terrorizing scientists in the museum basement and chewing up cops who are trying to attack it from the skylights. It gets around... There are a few loose ends. Early in the film, Dr. Green tells Lt. D'Agosta about the tanks of chemicals they use to strip the flesh from rhino bones. Later, she hides in such a tank herself, yet emerges with all her flesh... Daley might enjoy some of the other stuff, including city cops using acetylene torches to burn through the steel doors of the museum and rescue the terrified millionaires inside -- proving Chicago is the City that Works. And he will reflect that in the real world, no Chicago mayor would ever be so reckless as to order a society benefit to proceed in a museum still being scoured for a vicious decapitating pituitary-sucker. A guy gets his pituitary sucked out, he's not going to contribute to your next campaign. -- Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*

'The Relic' a story-starved horror film ... What can you say about a movie that is so desperate for a red herring, it conveniently plants a convicted rapist in the basement of the museum without any logical explanation? ... Then there's the final escape of the partygoers ... They scream and wave their arms like extras from "The Poseidon Adventure" while two cops with a flashlight and a couple of dogs are sniffing out this man-eating beast from the bowels of the museum as if they're looking for a lost cat. The acting is decent, as far as it goes, but there's not much to do when you must spend half your screen time mouthing lines that begin with the phrase, "Now let me get this straight. You mean to say that ..." Marc Caro, *Tribune*

GREAT BANNERS -- Jean Cattell, *Natural News*

"Hey, it could happen ...prognostications for '97" One morning in January, a guard at the Field Museum discovers that the creature from the "Relic" has eaten the Lions of Tsavo. -- clipping posted on Security Console bulletin board (no source)

NEXT WEEK HAVE YOUR SAY! Submit all reviews (and other material) by Tuesday noon to the *Natural News*, Carolyn Klyce, Editor. To make this opportunity available to all, reviews -- *only* reviews -- will be accepted in handwriting. Other material should be submitted in WordPerfect on floppy disk, or via E-mail to klyce@fmppr.fmnh.org.